

## #AtopicEczemaUnfiltered



Webinar guest speaker Jacinta Mullins is a Brisbane based naturopath.

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## Questions from Webinar Atopic Eczema Day 2024

### **What stress hormones should you be aware of or focus on for example, adrenaline or cortisol?**

When stress hormones are elevated for a prolonged period, they can have significant effects on the body. The main stress hormones involved are cortisol, adrenaline, and norepinephrine. Chronic elevation of these hormones can impact the gut-skin-mind connection causing an increase in eczema flare-ups.

### **If we heal the gut, do we have a better chance of controlling eczema overall or is it a combination of things?**

Healing the gut is one of the most important things and can help control eczema overall. However, there is often a big stress picture in people with eczema. People with eczema are either stressed because of their eczema, or stressful life events are causing the eczema to flare-up. It is so important to always treat the whole body for a better chance of controlling and managing eczema.

### **Microbiome sequencing product / s do you recommend?**

I primarily use Nutripath for microbiome testing in my clinic, as they are a practitioner-only product that tests for a broad number of things within the gut such as leaky gut, dysbiosis, parasites, and the short chain fatty acids. I find them to be reliable for assessing overall gut health. Their microbiome sequencing utilizes quantitative PCR.

### **What are your thoughts on a no-moisture treatment for TSW and eczema?**

Topical steroid withdrawal (TSW) is an extremely difficult thing to go through. TSW often presents as the skin being extremely flakey, and inflamed. Because of this I highly recommend keeping the skin moisturised. This helps maintain hydration and supports the healing of the compromised skin barrier often seen in TSW and eczema.

### **Was your degree in health science naturopathy?**

Yes, I completed a 4-year full-time bachelor's degree in Health Science Naturopathy at Torrens University in Brisbane.

### **How do you recommend gut health in a baby?**

In my clinic, I refer for gut testing to gain a clear understanding of what is going on within the gut, and provide treatment based on the results through age appropriate supplements, and herbal medicine. If the baby is breastfeeding, I also focus on the mother's gut, as her microbiome can directly influence the baby's. I recommend eating high-quality, organic whole foods at least 80% of the time and reducing exposure to household toxins, which can impact gut health.

It's important to include plenty of fiber from fruits, vegetables, and whole foods, while ensuring adequate intake of good quality protein and safe daily sun exposure. I advise minimising processed foods and managing stress through relaxing activities you enjoy, such as taking a bath or getting a massage. This can directly help the baby's microbiome.

### **What is important to look out for in itch relief moisturisers?**

My favourite herbs for reducing itchiness are licorice and chamomile. Licorice is anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and antimicrobial, making it effective for eczema. Chamomile has a long history of traditional use for eczema; it boasts anti-inflammatory properties, promotes wound healing, and soothes and calms inflamed skin. Aloe vera is also beneficial due to its soothing and cooling effects.

### **What is your advice from a naturopath perspective to manage eczema from the outside in, in terms of skincare management?**

Hydration is key! In eczema the skin barrier is impaired, so it is important to always address the outside, while working on the inside. I also recommend doing minimal skincare in individuals with eczema. Avoid harsh chemicals or fragrances, instead, use a gentle cleanser. Apply moisturiser that restores the skin's protective barrier, and consider doing wet wraps for additional support.

### **If cortisol is a trigger for flare ups, do you find psychological conditions like Autism, ADHD, etc. are over-represented with eczema sufferers?**

An increased level of cortisol for a long period of time can be harmful for the body and can aggravate eczema causing a flare-up. Elevated levels of cortisol can also cause psychological conditions such as anxiety and depression. It can be common in individuals with eczema to have anxiety and depression. Given the gut-brain-skin connection, addressing gut health and providing support for the nervous system can help alleviate both the psychological conditions and eczema.

### **Can you provide a brief summary of what you mean by traditional practices?**

Naturopathic medicine combines scientific evidence with traditional practices. Naturopathy encourages the body's innate ability to heal itself when provided with the right environment. Traditional practices include herbal medicine, lifestyle interventions such as yoga and meditation, and referrals for massage and physical therapy. It also includes food as medicine, encouraging the consumption of a diverse range of seasonal wholefoods.

## What topical moisturisers do you recommend for someone who is pregnant as the skin is stretching?

I love oils for pregnancy! Oils are safe and help nourish the skin during this time. Jojoba oil is one of my favourites for skin health. If a topical moisturiser is your preferred way to keep the skin hydrated, then I would look for one that doesn't contain any fragrances or parabens, especially during pregnancy.

## Do you offer face to face appointments or only online?

Currently, I offer online appointments for patients across Australia and worldwide. I use zoom as the communicating platform and herbs and supplements can be mailed directly. There are plans in the future to have a physical space for patients to see me in person. For now, I find that seeing patients online runs smoothly and is effective for treatment.

## Can Vitamin D oil / cream be put directly on the skin the way Vitamin A oil can be used on the skin?

Yes, vitamin D can be used on the skin. Vitamin D contains anti-inflammatory properties, and helps support skin barrier function. It also helps promote healing, and reduces the risk of skin infections. Vitamin D is generally well-tolerated by most skin types, including sensitive skin.

All information provided in this sheet is by Jacinta Mullins, Naturopath. This Information Sheet is provided as a service by the Eczema Association of Australasia Inc to give up-to-date, practical help on certain types of eczema or a particular aspect of its treatment.

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It is part of the role of the Association to provide information on a wide range of products and treatments to keep those involved with eczema as fully informed as possible as to all options available. For medical advice, consult your health professional.

For further information, or to become a member

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